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Castoro Cellars & Peltier Station

Filter Powder-Free for the Past Two Vintages

The “Holy Grail” reference gets thrown around quite a bit these days. So often, it seems, that the reference doesn’t quite project the impact it once carried.

That being said, [Castoro Cellars](#) of San Miguel, in addition to [Peltier Station](#) of Lodi, have reversed that trend by going filter powder-free for the past two vintages, thus achieving a “Holy Grail” of winery employee safety.

Filter powders such as Diatomaceous Earth (DE), while a mainstay of filtering/clarifying wines, are carcinogenic and, when airborne, are potentially hazardous to the health of anyone inhaling the fine powder. Used in Rotary Vacuum and bulk filtration, a significant portion of these very light, but abrasive powders become airborne the moment a winery employee begins pouring them from their container. Once inhaled, the highly abrasive particles are transported to the lower respiratory tract and can potentially cause long-term respiratory damage including airway remodeling.

For at least 20 years, wineries have mandated eliminating or at least minimizing the use of these powders, but until recently, none have achieved reliable and financially viable options; “until recently” being the operative phrase. With the primary focus being employee safety, eliminating the need for these filter powders presents significant cost savings as well. The cost of the powders themselves can add up, but processing and disposing of the waste is a substantial financial burden.

For this achievement, Castoro Cellars, makers of Dam Fine Wine since 1983, have been nominated for the 2013 Vintage Report Innovation Award Presented by Bank of the West. As a 10,000+ tons winery, Castoro Cellars has achieved that Holy Grail for employee safety for the 2012 and 2013 vintages by completely eliminating filter powder use of any kind. Through the implementation of the STS 200 System, a uniquely modified centrifuge system, and integrating its use with their existing cross-filter, Castoro has been DE-free for the past 2 vintages.

In early 2012, owner Niels Udsen adopted the unique system, provided by [Separator Technology Solutions](#). With an eye on reducing, not only cost and waste as well as increasing yield, quality, and value, Udsen was intent on improving employee safety. Working closely with Winemaker, Tom Myers and Winery Manager, Dave McHenry, Udsen was able to combine the STS 200 capabilities with their existing cross-flow to maximize yield, quality, and value of their wine, all without the need for filter powders and rotary vacuum filter processing, thus improving employee safety.

As “Holy Grails” go, this one certainly hits a high point for the industry.



Desludge from the STS System